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MWA Receives \$300,000 Grant for Large Cash for Grass Projects

Apple Valley— As the High Desert region seeks ways to further increase water conservation to meet new statewide conservation goals, the Mojave Water Agency (MWA) received good news in the form of a \$300,000 grant from the Bureau of Reclamation that will be used to help fund the Agency's new large scale Cash for Grass Program aimed at projects larger than 20,000 square feet.

"This funding couldn't have come at a more perfect time," said Beverly Lowry, MWA Board President. "We've worked hard as a region to conserve water and we have to roll up our sleeves to conserve more. This grant will enable us to achieve even greater water savings."

The funding is part of the federal government's WaterSMART Program for water conservation and water reuse projects. Established in 2010, the program has provided some \$250 million in grants with this latest round of \$50 million aimed at California and 22 other western states.

Since 2008, MWA working with the Alliance for Water Awareness and Conservation has offered the Cash for Grass program that provides 50 cents per square foot rebate for

turf removed. To date, more than 7.5 million square feet of turf has been removed resulting in an annual savings of 1,258.7 acre-feet with residential customers representing the majority of participants.

In November 2014, MWA quietly launched its Large Scale Turf Replacement Program with \$250,000 in local funding, and \$922,000 from the Prop 84 grant program administered by the Department of Water Resources. The large scale program provides a rebate of \$1 per square foot of turf removed. Similar to the residential program, the new program requires participants to replace at least 25 percent of the area of turf removed with desert adaptive/drought tolerant plants.

Currently three large scale turf conversions are underway. They include Spring Valley Lake, 38,410 square foot project area; Barstow Community College, 123,157 square foot project area; and Hesperia Unified School District, 500,000 square foot project area.

For more information on the large scale program, contact Nicholas Schneider, MWA Water Conservation Manager at 760.946.7038.

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